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Marginal Column

By RICHARD LOWENTHAL

THE first reaction from East Berlin to the Western proposal to hold the Berlin four-power conference between Britain, the United States, France and Russia — on January 4, suggests that the Soviet Government would favour a later date. The reason given is that Russian diplomatic tactics have for several months now been focused on France, aimed at making the most of French reluctance to accept West German rearmament within or without the European Defence Community, and that Russia is therefore interested in seeing France represented at the conference not by a caretaker Government but by men with a clear mandate behind them. But there may be another reason. The Russian desire to meet later, for while the French crisis is undoubtedly the great question-mark overhanging the conference, there are signs that a second and bigger problem arises from the critical situation in Russia itself.

A NUMBER of experts on Soviet affairs in Berlin agree in feeling that the internal struggle for power in the Kremlin is once again approaching a climax — for the first time since the fall of Beria in July. In support of this view they point to a number of symptoms of conflict and contradiction not only in Soviet foreign policy but in the fields of history and of science, and also in the policy followed in making Government appointments. Moreover, these developments are paralleled by a series of wavering and of conflict of policy in a number of satellite countries. These experts say that up to and including October, 1955, the Soviet Government has been in a state of steady retreat from Stalinist dogmatism, and from the personal Stalin cult, in all official Soviet publications.

THIS trend was still visible in the November issues of Soviet monthlies, which had been edited some time before. But at the beginning of November there was a sudden reversal of policy. Marshal Voroshilov's speech on November 7, the anniversary of the Revolution, his rejection of Stalin's achievement and his strong note of hostility to the West, could have been made almost word for word a year before. The Lenin-Stalin mausoleum was reopened to the public. Anti-American propaganda, stressing the immensity of economic and scientific achievements, was stepped up. The increase of traffic tendencies of the "American-imperialists" in the Press. All this coincided with the Soviet Note of November 8 — the "tough" Note which was generally interpreted as a sudden reversal of the idea of any four-power conference on European problems, until it was in turn reversed by the latest Note.

THE second group of symptoms which has aroused attention here concerns a number of changes in official appointments and in the administration of agriculture, all of them apparently connected with the steady increase in the personal power of Nikita Khrushchev, First Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party. When the policy of re-orientation by Khrushchev, following the failure of the previous policy of revolutionary experiment, was brought back from India to take over the Ministry of Agriculture and Development.

AT the end of November, a separate Ministry of Agriculture, Development and Stocks was split off from Benedictov's realm and given to Leonid Kornetov, a former assistant of Khrushchev in the Government of the Ukraine, and immediately afterwards another member of Khrushchev's Ukrainian circle, Mikhail Gerasimov, was appointed to the post of Deputy First Secretary. Then followed the most striking change of all — the deposition by Khrushchev of the Party Secretary of the Leningrad region, Andrei Popov. It was a striking development because Andrei Popov had throughout his career been one of Khrushchev's closest supporters, being virtually regarded as his personal representative in the vital Leningrad region; and also because he was succeeded by V.P. Kostov, who once before had attacked Andrei Popov for lack of vigilance towards Jews and Soviet bourgeois elements at the time of the "Doctors' plot". In the minds of experts here, this last move has raised the question of whether Khrushchev, after many years of loyal co-operation with Malenkov, has now decided to challenge directly the power of the Party Secretary of the Soviet Government; and whether for that purpose he has sought an alliance with the surviving exponents of unrepentant Stalinist extremism.

FINALLY, all these developments coincide with symptoms of indecision in the most vital questions of both foreign and economic policy. Contrary to what has happened in some of the satellite States, the new Soviet drive for improving agriculture and expanding light industry was started without a parallel cutting down of targets for heavy industry. In the light of this, the glaring contradiction between conservative Soviet Notes to the West, as well as the symptoms of an internal struggle assume a new significance.

Berlin, December 11.

US Guarantees Jordan Border, Report Says

The U.S. has promised to guarantee Jordan's present borders and to greatly increase its financial aid if Jordan makes peace with Israel, the Damascus daily, reported on Sunday.

The diplomatic correspondent of "Al-Difa", Old City daily, wrote yesterday that although Jordan's attitude towards peace talks with Israel remains unaltered, some slight changes have been introduced due to "extraordinary circumstances."

These circumstances sent Premier Fawzi Mulk to Damascus on Sunday and he is to go to Cairo, Baghdad and Beirut on the same mission if it is necessary, it was said. The correspondent adds that a unified Arab decision must be adopted by the end of this month.

M.A.C. Rejects Israel, Jordan Complaints

Two complaints, one by Israel and another by Jordan, on the exchange of fire near Shufra in the vicinity of Tulkarm on November 24, were rejected yesterday by the Israel-Jordan Mixed Armistice Commission since the chairman abstained from voting.

The Army spokesman reports. Regarding the Israel complaint about firing on an Israeli plane on November 23, the following resolution was adopted: "The Jordan delegate has been asked to explain the orders prohibiting such acts will be strengthened. Therefore, the M.A.C. considers the Israel complaint as settled."

The M.A.C. will meet again tomorrow.

According to ANA, it was decided to send an inquiry team to Zawiya village where a member of the Jordan National Guard was reportedly wounded on Sunday night.

SYRIAN ENVOY, MURPHY DISCUSS WATER PLANS

WASHINGTON, Monday (G.N.A.) — The Syrian Ambassador to the U.S., Farid al-Din, met today with Mr. Robert Murphy, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State, to discuss the problem of the regional development of water resources adjacent to Israel.

Capital Punishment May Be Implemented

By SHAY SHAPIRO, Jerusalem Post Knesset Correspondent

Death sentences will not necessarily be commuted to life imprisonment in the future as was the custom in the past; the Ministry of Justice no longer considers itself bound by the tacit understanding that as long as the Knesset does not clarify its stand on capital punishment, no execution should be carried out.

Commons Debate On Jerusalem

LONDON, Monday (Reuters). — The Government was asked in the Commons today by Mr. Richard Wood, Conservative, whether the U.N. resolution of November 29, 1947, providing for an international regime for Jerusalem was still in force and whether the Government would try to raise this matter at the next Assembly.

Foreign Under-Secretary Arthur Dods Parker replied that the Assembly recommendation in question was reaffirmed in 1950 and a statute for Jerusalem was subsequently prepared. The Assembly had since taken no action.

"Too Early to Say"

Mr. Dods Parker added: "We very much hope that the question of Jerusalem and the holy places may be regularized, but it is too early to say whether positive results could be expected from discussion at the next Assembly."

Labour Member Barnett Janney asked the Under-Secretary to take into consideration that the Israel Government had treated this problem of the different religious sects with "great sensitivity" and would he try to get a settlement different from the one originally suggested.

Mr. Dods Parker did not accept the suggestion that the proposal so far considered was a wrong one. He agreed that an early settlement was desirable.

Minister Eliashiv Presents Credentials

MOSCOW, Monday (UPI). — Israeli Minister Eliashiv presented his credentials to President Klement Voroshilov today.

Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Valentin Zorin was present at the ceremony and at a 15-minute talk between President Voroshilov and the Israeli Minister.

An Israeli delegation spokesman described the atmosphere as "very friendly."

Ben Gurion Abandon City Life To Set Up House at Sde Boker

Jerusalem Post Reporter

SDE BOKER, Monday. — The Prime Minister and Mrs. Ben Gurion are tonight settling their new home in order here. Mr. Ben Gurion, who will be 67 on Thursday, is busy with his library, arranging his books and papers in his library study, while Mrs. Ben Gurion is arranging the two bedrooms.

Moving Day For Prime Minister

Jerusalem Post Reporter

TEL AVIV, Monday. — The Ben Gurion family moved today, and were up before dawn to do their final packing. Friends, including the Ministerial Secretary-General, Mr. Moshe Shapira, Mr. E. Aranne, M.K. Mr. Y. Urr, of the Mafal Central Committee, Mr. Hagai Avriel, Ministerial Secretary, Mr. Ben Gurion's brother, Mr. E. Ben Gurion, and his brother Eshel, formerly Director-General of the Prime Minister's Office, called early to see Mr. Ben Gurion off.

A Ministry of Defence truck was loaded up with the last household items while the Prime Minister's car waited outside the house, together with other military tenders and jeeps.

The Prime Minister's military aide, Mr. Nehemia Argov, and his private secretary, Mr. Eshel, accompanied the Prime Minister, while the conveyance was joined at Masmyia by Mr. Ted Kollek, Director-General of the Prime Minister's Office.

Before they left Tel Aviv, Mr. Ben Gurion shook hands with all the political leaders, being virtually regarded as his personal representative in the vital Leningrad region; and also because he was succeeded by V.P. Kostov, who once before had attacked Andrei Popov for lack of vigilance towards Jews and Soviet bourgeois elements at the time of the "Doctors' plot".

In the minds of experts here, this last move has raised the question of whether Khrushchev, after many years of loyal co-operation with Malenkov, has now decided to challenge directly the power of the Party Secretary of the Soviet Government; and whether for that purpose he has sought an alliance with the surviving exponents of unrepentant Stalinist extremism.

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C-o-L Up 1 Point; Figure Now 208

The Cost of Living Index reached 208 points during November, the Central Bureau of Statistics and Economic Research announces. This is an increase of one point over the October figure, and a rise of 108 points over that for the base month, September 1951.

Figures for selected previous months are: September 1951—100; January 1953—112; April—144; August—182; November—175; March 1953—184; May—192; July 200; September—200; and October—207.

C-o-L Allowance Talks Inconclusive

TEL AVIV, Monday. — Negotiations between representatives of the Histadrut and the Manufacturers' Association on Cost-of-Living allowances for the coming months and the renewal of collective agreements for the coming year were inconclusive today. The talks will be continued on Thursday.

A joint communiqué issued tonight said that the talks were broken off as the Manufacturers' Association had not yet clarified its stand following yesterday's Cabinet decision not to intervene in the C-o-L dispute.

Churchills Help Fight Barn Fire

WESTERHAM, England, Monday (UPI). — Sir Winston Churchill and his family helped in to aid firemen last night when flames broke out in a hay barn on his Chartwell estate.

Coalition Solution Seen Near

Increased tension and a variety of rumors in the Knesset today accompanied yesterday's coalition negotiations, indicating the end was near. Observers think that today, but at any rate not later than the beginning of next week, the public will be wiser as to the composition of the new Cabinet.

Today the crucial meetings between Mapai and the General Zionists are expected to take place, advantages having been taken of the unexpected one-day recess. Yesterday afternoon, Mapai had an inconclusive meeting with Mapai — foreign Minister Moshe Shapira, reported to representatives of the Progressives, Mitrani and Hapeli on the eve of talks with the General Zionists.

British Gov't Acts To Avert Rail Strike

LONDON, Monday (Reuters). — The Government tonight began a desperate race against time to avert a threatened Christmas strike of 400,000 key railwaymen called for next Monday.

Official Statement on Mid-East Policy by British Labour Likely

By GEORGE LICHTHEIM, Jerusalem Post Correspondent

LONDON, Monday. — An official statement of Labour Party policy on the Middle East is now regarded as probable when Parliament debates foreign affairs on Thursday. The attack by Mr. Emmanuel Shinwell, former Labour Defence Minister, on Mr. Aneurin Bevan yesterday and particularly his statement that Labour does not favour a policy of "appeasement" in the Middle East, is expected to lead to a statement of the party's position.

15-20% Bus Fare Rise Favoured

The Economic Ministers' Committee has today decided to favour a 15-20% increase on the basis of partial figures presented by the Minister of Communications, Mr. J. Sapir, in his last meeting, a Ministry spokesman said in Jerusalem yesterday.

The actual book-keeping methods of the bus cooperatives, showing a deficit, cannot be taken as the basis of such a rise, it was stated, as the public has no control over their expenditure. Further, in many cases, the bus cooperatives' expenses were such as would not be incurred under normal business practice. It was claimed.

Bevan to Visit Egypt, Israel

Mr. Aneurin Bevan, leader of the left wing of the British Labour Party, is to visit Egypt and Israel shortly after Christmas, ANA reports.

Syndicated articles by Mr. Bevan have been appearing in a Cairo paper.

Dulles: EDC Failure Would Force Policy Reappraisal

US Warning Comes As 'Bombshell'

PARIS, Monday (Reuters). — Secretary of State Dulles today dropped a bombshell in Paris when he brusquely warned France that unless the European Army treaty was adopted soon the U.S. would have to submit his policy of aiding to an "agonising reappraisal."

Adenauer Rejects 'Neutralization'

BONN, Monday (Reuters). — West German Chancellor Adenauer said today that any proposal to neutralize Germany was "completely unacceptable" and not worth discussing at the Berlin four-power conference.

Addressing a press conference after his return from Paris, he said it was impossible to "neutralize a people of 50 million against its will — to take from it the right to defend its own skin if necessary."

Dean Quits Korea For Consultation in US

TOKYO, Monday (Reuters). — Mr. Arthur Dean, Chief U.S. negotiator who walked out of the preliminary talks with the Communists for a Korean peace conference at Panmunjom last Saturday, announced today that he would leave for Washington tomorrow to consult his senior officers in the State Department.

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